

Peach Fruit Fly Regulatory Response

May 25, 2006

Quarantine response for exotic fruit flies is based on internationally accepted protocols. Quarantines are established to prevent artificial spread of a serious pest, such as the peach fruit fly. In a commercial agricultural area, a quarantine is imposed when six adult fruit flies (or a mated female, live eggs or other life stages) are found within three miles of each other within a time period equal to one life cycle of the fly.*

The quarantine area for Fresno is centered on the initial peach fruit fly detection sites and extends in a 4-1/2 mile radius. The total area of the quarantine is 106 square miles: 95 in Fresno County and 11 in Madera. This is a relatively small area in both counties. Since the boundaries must be described to trading partners, the actual streets approximating the circle are set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and the Fresno and Madera County Agricultural Commissioners. Backyard host fruit, farms, commercial packers retail groceries, fruit stands and farmers' markets within the area are all regulated. Quarantine oversight allows farmers and packers to have their fruit certified, so it can move out of the area.

Immediate regulatory response convinces trading partners and the USDA that the fly infestation will be contained. Without that response, the USDA and trading partners must consider the entire state as infested with peach fruit fly, rather than just the current area of Fresno and Madera counties. Even with rapid quarantine action, some trading partners countries may choose to quarantine larger areas. This can create extreme economic impacts for growers who ship to those countries.

Quarantine protocols are enabled by regulation and executed by state, federal and county personnel. The following actions are taken:

- The quarantine area and host commodities are identified
- Hold notices are placed on affected properties preventing movement of any host fruit
- Maps of the regulated area and quarantine requirements are provided to interested parties
- Common carriers, agricultural industries and others are notified of regulated commodities and approved quarantine treatments
- State highway departments, weigh stations and law enforcement agencies, etc., are notified, as appropriate
- Compliance agreements are issued to any business wishing to sell or transport host fruit.
- Facilities for post harvest treatments are maintained or identified
- Local landfill and disposal companies are contacted regarding the disposal of seized infested host material
- A secure holding area is maintained for seized infested host material on the project site
- Treatments by growers participating in the bait treat program are supervised
- Public information is provided through meetings, press releases, mailings and handouts

* In an urban area, where there is little chance of harvesting an infested commercial lot of fruit, the trigger for peach fruit fly is eight adult flies (or a mated female, eggs, or other life stages).